

## James Butler's newsletter #10 June 03

Dear All

*Roll out those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer, You'll wish that summer could always be here.*

Nat King Cole

Apologies to readers in the Southern Hemisphere, but I am truly enjoying a great week of British summer weather - ice creams, tennis on the TV (no Brits of course) and an amazing weekend in West Devon (to find a fantastic location and warm welcome click [here](#) for Stowford House, Okehampton).

Thank you to all the new subscribers this month - a late surge has seen me smash my target of 150 subscribers by this issue - in fact this will be sent to just over 200 people. I still want to grow though, so please remember to pass this on to friends and colleagues if you think it would interest them.

Now, I have spoken with a few readers in the last week and a couple have mentioned how they love the tips and exercises (thanks!), but then struggle to translate that into action. Of course, it goes without saying that this is all about them and nothing to do with the way I write, but I thought I would make an extra effort to encourage action this month! I hope you find the topics inspiring, but before you read on, I ask you to commit now to changing just one thing when you finish reading (however big or small). Your own commitment should be enough, but if you want to be held to that commitment in a supportive, friendly way click [here](#) and type in what your commitment is, and when you want me to check in with you on it by e-mail.

This month we will look at:

- **Swedish Philosophy (more fun than it sounds)**
- **Painless Business**
- **Inspiration and Humour**
- **Book Review (and music and film)**
- **The World according to Andersson, Anderson and Ulvaeus**

Much mainstream philosophy passed me by when I was in education (us scientists hate getting too deep), but these three legendary figures have had an amazing impact on me and many, many people around the world with their profound insight into the human mind. For those who don't recognise the names, their message was brought to us by Agnetha, Bjorn, Benny and Anni-Frid (Frida). So, don your gold chains, chest wigs and flared trousers, here is my take on five concepts they introduced in the 1970s:

1. The importance of financial planning in creating a perfect life

*I work all night, I work all day, to pay the bills I have to pay  
Ain't it sad  
And still there never seems to be a single penny left for me  
That's too bad  
In my dreams I have a plan*

*Money, Money, Money Abba, 1976*

Long-time subscribers will recall how we looked at money back in October 2002, and how, once we have a greater understanding of our own situations, and more control, we free ourselves up to create more of what we want in life. Clearing debts, controlling outgoings and looking to grow our earnings are actions open to all of us. With that firm base we can then start to look at building a secure financial future - building assets that will sustain us when we choose to work less or stop altogether. NB A lottery ticket, or the wealthy man Frida and Agnetha dreamed of, is rarely considered an asset. If you would like to see that issue of my newsletter, click [here](#) and send a blank e-mail.

2. We all have an unsavoury habit/addiction we could get rid of

*Mamma mia, here I go again  
My my, how can I resist you  
Mamma mia, does it show again  
My my, just how much I've missed you*

*Mamma Mia Abba, 1975*

It could be smoking, drinking, TV, 70s Eurovision winners, dancing on tables at the works do - we all have something we would be better off not doing, but somehow we keep doing it. And we keep doing it because in some way we need it and it brings us something. The key to breaking that cycle is to find something else to meet that need - preferably something less damaging!! Kicking a habit is a tough challenge - which is why you get such strength and confidence when you know you can do it, on top of any physiological benefits. As it happens, a previous newsletter did cover this - click [here](#) if you would like a copy (this is the last plug for a previous edition, honest!).

3. Have no regrets - failure is how we gain experience and perspective

*Though we never thought that we could lose  
There's no regret  
If I had to do the same again  
I would, my friend, Fernando*

*Fernando, Abba, 1975*

A lesson I learnt when asking out those fine young ladies of Norfolk in the mid 1980s. Believe me, I have a lot of perspective, if not a lot of experience! We can all learn from everything we do, and sometimes we might not do the same again, my friend. But the key issue is to have no regrets. When we choose a path to follow, we do that to the best of our ability given what we know at the time. If the outcome is less than we hoped for, we can learn for next time, but we cannot change the decision we made. We have to resolve that in our heads and move on, otherwise that regret becomes another rock in the suitcase of baggage we carry through life. How can that regret help you now? By learning from it and ditching it. And in no other way. Do you have any regrets you'd like to ditch once and for all? And **no-one** is allowed to say "Yeah, subscribing to this drivel".....

4. Have a dream, be positive

*If you see the wonder of a fairy tale  
You can take the future even if you fail  
I believe in angels  
Something good in everything I see  
I believe in angels  
When I know the time is right for me  
I'll cross the stream - I have a dream*

*I Have A Dream, Abba, 1979*

Get out those cigarette lighters and wave them in the air (you won't need them for smoking because you gave that up at point 2, remember?). Successful people set goals and work towards them. There are very few people who meandered their way to success (if you are one of them please let me know). And successful people look for the positive in situations, not the negative. Those of you conversant in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (which I am not), will know we get what we think about - so if we think negative things they will come true. If we think positive things, might they come true? So what is your dream, and how can you make it a reality? What needs to change in you and around you for that reality to occur?

5. Will you?

*Voulez-vous  
Take it now or leave it  
Now is all we get  
Nothing promised, no regrets  
Voulez-vous  
Ain't no big decision  
You know what to do  
La question c'est voulez-vous  
Voulez-vous*

*Voulez-Vous, Abba, 1979*

I promised I would try and get you to take action with this newsletter. "Now is all we get. Nothing promised, no regrets. Voulez-vous?"

No further questions, your honour.

This seemed a good place to stop this Abba thing, before I strayed into Gimme, Gimme, Gimme (a Man After Midnight), which may have changed some people's views of me. Finally, for those of you who know my lovely wife, you'll understand why my favourite Abba lyric is "*I was in seventh heaven when I kissed the teacher*".

### **Painless Business**

My summer project now has a name - Painless Business - and the website is in development. I have written a third of the material (would have written more if I hadn't 'had' to listen to my Abba Gold CD 3 times for this newsletter) and I am in the process of testing the material with my R&D Team (a big thanks to them). So what is Painless Business?

You know how we all work hard, put in effort and occasionally 'feel the pain' at work, yet often we feel that the pain and effort could have produced so much more in the way of profit, success, achievements? Well, Painless Business is a 12 week programme for anyone who feels their pain and effort deserves more success. The programme takes us through a series of steps looking to create support structures and systems that ensure our efforts are aimed at the right things, in the right way, at the right time. Following the 12 week programme, participants will have a far greater sense of purpose, will have improved their own effectiveness, simplified their operations to maximise return on effort and will have a strong foundation for growing the business.

Following development with the R&D team, this programme is now available for £500 for the 12 weeks (individual sessions are available at £50 a session). For further details click [here](#).

## Inspiration and Humour

I'm afraid I can't beat George Best from last month, but another popular icon has this to offer:

*Dream as if you'll live forever. Live as if you'll die today.* James Dean

And on a deeper note, I love this:

*Happiness is not in our circumstances, but in ourselves. It is not something we see, like a rainbow, or feel, like the heat of a fire. Happiness is something we are.*

John B. Sheerin

And as it's summer, a summer joke (thanks to Kim for letting me know of this).

*Definition of Outdoor Barbecuing - It's the only type of cooking a "real" man will do. When a man volunteers to do such cooking, the following chain of events is put into motion:*

1. *The woman goes to the store.*
2. *The woman fixes the salad, vegetables and dessert.*
3. *The woman prepares the meat for cooking, places it on a tray along with the necessary cooking utensils, and takes it to the man, who is lounging beside the grill, drinking a beer.*
4. *The man places the meat on the grill.*
5. *The woman goes inside to set the table and check the vegetables.*
6. *The woman comes out to tell the man that the meat is burning.*
7. *The man takes the meat off the grill and hands it to the woman.*
8. *The woman prepares the plates and brings them to the table.*
9. *After eating, the woman clears the table and does the dishes.*
10. *The man ask the woman how she enjoyed "her night off".*

*And, upon seeing her annoyed reaction, concludes that there's just no pleasing some women.*

And of course, this is just a characature for the purposes of humour, and I mean no disrespect to either gender!

## Book Review

My latest find on the book front is *Breakthrough Rapid Reading* by Peter Kump, recommended to me by Mark Smith of Morgan Cole solicitors (I met him on the MV Oriana - if you ever need an IT lawyer call me for Mark's number). I have only just started the book (and I know there is a gag in there about surely I would have read it quickly), and already my reading speed has increased 25%. As someone who loves to absorb the ideas and thoughts of so many different sources, I sense this is an improved skill I will really benefit from. Watch this space for a progress report. See more about the book [here](#).

As you may have already sensed, something I have had fun with recently is *Abba Gold - Greatest Hits* (a compendium of the finest in Swedish philosophy, and great to drive to!). To see it on Amazon, click [here](#). And if you like Abba, you can do worse than *Muriel's Wedding* - a scream of a film and perfect Friday-night-with-a-Pizza fare - available on DVD or video at Amazon (Click for [DVD](#) or [VHS](#)).

## Final Words

So have you found something on which you can take action? No? Well, go back and start again and don't put this down until you have!! And as a coach, I firmly believe we can all achieve more with that supportive professional alongside us. To quote some more Abba from 1977:

*If you change your mind, I'm the first in line. Honey I'm still free. Take a chance on me.*

The first session is definitely free, so why not take a chance on me? Voulez-vous (a- hah).....

Warmest regards

James Butler

JBC

"Realise Your Potential"

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Is your business suffering growing pains? Are your efforts producing the success you want? Perhaps you could benefit from Painless Business, a new 12-week programme for people in business who want to achieve more success with less effort. E-mail [info@jamesbutler.org](mailto:info@jamesbutler.org) and put Painless Business in the Subject line to receive details.